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TRADITIONS OF THE PAPAGO INDIANS

BY HENRIETTE ROTHSCHILD KROEBER

101 114 THE Pima Indians of Arizona, and the adjacent Papago of the same State and of Sonora, are regarded as distinct tribes, but are said by themselves to be so nearly identical in language and customs, that they seem to go back to a common origin of no great antiquity. All that is known of their mythology points to similar close affiliations. The largest collection of traditions assembled, though it is clearly only an outline, is by Frank Russell, from the Pima.[1] An older sketch is by Grossman.[2] Further information as to the beliefs of the same tribe is given by Bancroft[3] and the writer.[4] The Papago live in more forbidding and less accessible localities, and less is known of them. Davidson[5] provides a distorted account of their creation story, which Bancroft[6] repeats, and the author has contributed "Coyote Tales" to the Journal of American Folk-Lore.[7] The traditions now presented were obtained from Juan Dolores, an educated full-blood member of the tribe. It appears, from the manner in which his first story tallies with the others mentioned, that both Pimas and Papagos possess an important and interesting myth of the origin of the world and of themselves, in which many incidents are told in the same form, and in which Earth-Maker or Earth-Doctor and Older-Brother are the leading personages or gods, with Coyote filling a different and subsidiary place.

OUTLINES OF THE CREATION MYTH

539 In the beginning there was nothing but darkness and water. The darkness, the water, and the air composed the whole universe. As

[1] *Twenty-sixth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology*, pp. 3-390 (1908). See pp. 206-230.

[2] F. E. Grossman, "The Pima Indians of Arizona," in the *Smithsonian Report* for 1871 (1873), pp. 407-419.

[3] H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific Coast*, vol. iii (1883), pp. 76-80.

[4] "Pima Tales," in *American Anthropologist*, new series, vol. x (1908), pp. 231-235.

[5] *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1865, pp. 131-133.

[6] Work cited, pp. 75-77.

[7] Vol. xxii (1909).

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539 they came together, wherever they met, the friction of these bodies, the darkness and the water, finally produced a living being, which lay upon the water and was carried from place to place. Whatever formed this being also fed it, and it grew until it became a great man. He became our "Older-Brother," the first-born.

After he became a man, he saw that there was a substance gathering around him, the bubbles or scum which always gather around an object in the water. He took some of that and made it into earthworms. He sent them around to gather up the stuff he had seen and had already gathered around himself. They went about and gathered and gathered, and left it all around him. They kept on piling up and piling up. Finally he found himself on a little piece of dry land. So he kept on sending them out, and they kept on piling this and piling it. That was the way he made the earth. First he made the earthworms, and they made the earth.

After the earth was made, it kept on floating. It had no steady place. So Older-Brother made spiders, and sent them all around to tie the earth down. So they went around and made their web, and tied the earth and left it on the water. Then the earth had a steady place.

He made the people and all kinds of things to grow. At that time all animals and birds were people. It is told that many things, when first made, did not work right, and had to be changed or made over.

The people called for light. They gathered around. He had told them the names of other things; and when they called for light, they asked what name they should give it when it came. They tried different names. One said to call it "a long time." After they had already decided to call it this, Coyote said he had a better name. He wanted them to call it by a name meaning "to go over, to climb up." But they would not accept that word, and they took the first name, which means "day" now, and also means "a long time." So the sun came up. The first time it came up, it was very hot, for it was too close to the earth. Then the next time they put it farther away, and it was too far. Then they brought it down. They said to put it away over on one side, and that did not work. It only gave them light in a certain place and in no other place. Finally, after moving it around to various positions, they got it in the place it is now. Then Older-Brother made the moon and the stars come up to give light after the sun goes down.

After a while the people became dissatisfied with some things that had been made, and thought they should be different, so that they might get along better. For instance, the rattlesnake had teeth; but they were like a little plant now called rattlesnake-weed, which is sharp on top, but bends easily when touched. In the evenings the

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children would go out and get a snake and throw it around, chasing 539
one another. Of course it would bite, but did not hurt. The poor snake never slept because the children always threw it around. It used to cry all night. So it called upon Older-Brother to give it some way to protect itself. Older-Brother came down. The people gathered together; and after they had been singing four nights, they were to wait on the fourth morning when the sun came up. Sun-rays look like sharp points. It is said that Older-Brother took the ends of the sun-beams and mixed them with something in the water, and put it on the rattlesnake's teeth. So it is a part of the strength of the sun which kills a person when the rattlesnake bites. After he put the water on the snake's teeth, they became poisoned; and he announced this to the people, and said that the snake was from that time more dangerous, and nobody was to pick it up. So from that time on the snake has been poisonous.

After he had made the people, all animals, birds, and so on, they began to multiply, and the big things walked over the little things. They gathered together and called Older-Brother to come down and help them out. So he came down. He gathered them together. He left it to the people to decide what they were going to do, how the smaller people were to live. Then he divided them off, and told how certain people were to live in certain houses. He put them off in different places,—some in the mountains, some in trees, and so on. They were all told where they were to be to keep out of the way of the others. Finally a little Worm said that he was so small, that big things stepped on him, and he could not run fast enough to keep out of the way. He thought it would be better that, after a thing had lived long enough, it died or went to some other place. They did not know what "to die" was; but he said it was "never to be on this earth again." But the people said that those who had lived long enough here were to be put into some other place. Then the question was if this other place would not be filled up also. In speaking of where this place is, the Indians generally say that it is in the east, under the rising sun. After they leave the place where they have lived, they are forever singing and dancing in the east. They join hands, and the circle gets larger and larger as the new people come; and they keep on going around and around, singing and dancing. The surrounding country contains all things they like to eat, such as cactus-fruit and all kinds of game. When they speak of a person about to die, they say, "He is going after the cactus-fruit in the east." Sometimes they say, "He is going to join in the singing."

After they had decided that people should die and leave this place when they had lived here a long time, there grew up a great many who did wonderful things, such as Rain, Wind, and Coyote. There was a

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539 wise man in the east who had a fine daughter. Young men from all over the country came to see this girl, but she would not marry any of them. One of these wise men had a son, and he gave his boy a talk before he started out to see the girl. The son staid there with the girl, but could not bring her home. But she had a baby, and he took the child with him. When he came to his village, he left the baby over the hill and went home. He told his father how he had lived with the woman, but she would not come home with him; and that she had had a little baby, and he had brought it, but left it over the hill. His father already knew all this. He told his son to go back and bring the baby. The young man went back, and found the baby crying. He staid a long time, but would not pick up the baby, and at last went back and left it. He thought that if his wife did not like him enough to come with him, he would not bring the baby home. He would leave it there. So he went home alone. And his father sent him back again. When he got there a second time, he saw that the earth all around the baby was moist. It was the baby's tears running down and making the earth moist. He looked at that, and thought that it was wonderful. He staid there a long time, but could not pick up the baby, and went back once more. His father sent him a third time; and the third time he arrived, he saw a little stream of water running down from where the baby was. And the fourth time he went, he saw that the water was coming all around where the baby was. It was coming up. And he went back and told his father what he had seen. So they went to prepare. The father said that there would be a flood that would cover the whole earth. And he told the people that the water was going to cover the earth; so the different things began to call upon their Older-Brother to save them.

Older-Brother came down and made a pot out of grease-wood for himself. Coyote came and asked him what he was going to do to save himself. He told him, if he could make one like that to get inside of, it would be all right. So Coyote went to work and made one like it. The Humming-Bird asked what he should do to save himself. Older-Brother told him to fly up and hang on the heavens. So he flew up there. The Woodpecker was told to hang up there also. When the water reached the tail of the Woodpecker, he began to cry; but the Humming-Bird told him that he need not cry, because he was the smaller of the two and he was not crying, and, as Older-Brother had said they would be all right, they would be.

Before Coyote and Older-Brother went into their "houses," they said, that, according as they came out first, they were to be related to each other. After the water went down, Older-Brother came out first. Coyote came out later, and went around and looked all over, and saw the tracks of little birds. He followed them around to say

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that he had come out first, so that they might be some relation to him. 539
He did not find them, but finally met Older-Brother, and tried to tell him that he was to be Older-Brother because he had come out first. He told him how many things he had seen already. Of course, Older-Brother would not believe him.

Older-Brother and Coyote walked around, and finally decided to make some more people. Coyote was to help. They made them out of mud, and put them aside to dry. After a certain day, they were to come to life. On this day Coyote and Older-Brother went to see them; and they had already come to life, and were speaking to one another. They were people as we see them now. Then they decided to make others. Coyote sat over to one side and made some. He did not make them right. He would have one leg or one arm missing. He put them away to dry; and after a certain day, they were to speak. When the day came that they were to speak, they both went over to see them. When Older-Brother saw how they were made, he did not wish them to be mixed with his people. He gathered them up and threw them over to the other side (in another world) to live by themselves.

THE UNDECIDED RACE

There once lived an old woman who had to care for two little boys whose father and mother had died and left them to her. In some mysterious way the boys grew up, true and obedient to the old woman. They followed all the teachings of the old woman. And they were well liked by all the people, because they were brave, good hunters, and good runners, — things which were required, at that time, of all good men. Many girls of marriageable age spoke well of the boys in the hearing of the old woman; but the old woman said nothing. She thought the boys were too young yet to be married, until one day she went for water to the pond. At the pond she found a very good-looking girl. The girl took the earthenware jar or olla down from the old woman's head. She filled it with water and set it to one side, and said, "Remember me, grandmother, when you are to choose a wife for one of your boys. And I should be glad if some day I might have a chance to come and stay with you to do the work which you are now doing." The old woman was much pleased with the appearance of the girl and with what she said, and she told the girl to choose one of the boys. But the girl said she could not choose, for she cared for one as much as the other; the boys both being good-looking and young, and both good hunters and brave. The old woman said she could not decide to which one to give the girl, because she loved one as much as the other, and to give the girl to one would offend the other. But she said, "You remain here, and wait for the boys. I will go home and tell them to run a race from there to this pond, and whoever

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539 wins the race will be the one to marry you." The girl staid, and the old woman went home. She gave her boys a long talk, telling them that she was now old, could not do the work, and that she had found a fine-looking girl, who spoke well, and whom she liked, and she could not decide which one to give her to. This was the only way to decide which one was to marry her, as she loved the boys and did not want to offend either. The race was already won; for the boy who had followed her teachings best, and had got up each morning and run a training-race, would surely be the best runner, and so win.

So after she said this, she sent them out to run the race. As they were both good runners, they staid together until they came within sight of the girl. In this race (at the present time) they run, and throw a wooden ball with the foot; and the one who places the ball across the line (in this case, to where the girl stood) wins, even though he may be behind in the race. When they came within sight of the girl, the oldest one got ahead a little; but the boy behind, not having thrown his ball as far as the other, reached it first, and threw it across the line. When the older had got ahead, he had thrown his ball, but did not succeed in reaching the girl. Then the younger one threw the ball where the girl stood, and she picked it up and hid it in her dress. Now, when the boys came up, they quarrelled about who had won the race. The older was ahead, but the younger from behind had thrown the ball to where the girl was. So they quarrelled. The girl was as much puzzled as ever over which one to choose. She said, "I will keep this ball until you find out from your grandmother to which one I belong, and then I will return the ball." So the boys went home, and told their grandmother how they came out in the race. The grandmother could not decide, either. It was a puzzle. Both seemed to have won. The grandmother said, "Perhaps it is not time for either one of you to be married. There are yet many girls as good-looking as she is, and perhaps some day we shall find one." So neither married.

In those days, when a boy and girl were to be married, a place in the house was fixed for them to sleep. The boy must stay there four nights before he could take the girl home, or before he could be received into the family. If he was to live with the girl's parents, he would stay four nights; and then early in the morning he would go back home, or go hunting. But after four nights, he was received into the family, or could take the girl home.

When the girl told her parents what had happened, they made the place ready for her. There she slept for four nights, but nobody came. The girl still had the ball, as she had said she would keep it until one of the boys came, after the grandmother had decided which had won the race; but as the old woman could not decide, no one came. And

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then it happened that in time she found she was going to have a child. 539

When the old woman heard about this, she went to the place to see if the child would in any way resemble one of her boys, so that she could give the girl to one. But when the child was born, she saw, that, while in all other respects it looked like a man, its fingers and toes were long claws, more like those of a wildcat or some other animal.

The girl and her parents raised the child. When it got so that it could play with other children, it used to make them cry by scratching them, and there were many quarrels between the mother of the strange child and other women. The child grew worse and worse as it grew older, until one night, at one of the gatherings which the people had in those times, under the direction of an old man called the "smoke-keeper," to decide questions of importance, the men said that this thing of scratching the children was getting so bad that it seemed that in a very short time there would be trouble, because the child had grown now. In some way they must rid themselves of it. Then the old man, the father of the girl, told his daughter to take the child away. If it were left there, in a very short time it would be killed, anyhow.

So one night the young woman led the boy straight south. In the morning they came to the edge of the open desert. But she kept on going and going, until by noon they were in the middle of the desert. There she saw the heat-waves rising from the ground; and she stopped, and said, "My boy, you see the heat-waves. Beyond that is where your father lives." She told him that this waving was the strength of his father. His father lay and breathed. This was his breath. "Beyond that you will find him," she said. "Go and see him. And if any time you wish to see me, you know where I am. But it is dangerous for you to live with me any longer." And there she left the boy, telling him to go beyond the wave of heat and find his father.

The boy went, and the waving of heat kept on ahead of him the same distance. Late in the day he came to the south end of the desert. There he could not see the waves any more, so he looked back and saw them behind him. Then he turned around and went back, thinking he had passed the place; but he could not find his father.

As he had come one way and did not find his father, he thought he would go another way. To one side of this plain there is a little mountain rising directly from the level country. He came to this mountain after sundown, and went up. He found a great cave.[1] After four turns he came to a little round place, something like a house. At the back of this cave he found a little fireplace; and to one side, a little hole used for pounding mesquite-beans. As he saw these things,

[1] This cave is still to be found as described.

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539 he thought this must be the place where his father lived, though his father was not there. Every morning after that, he used to go out; and he would see the waving of heat over at one side. Because his mother had told him that that was the strength of his father, and beyond that he could find his father, he used to follow the thing around, but never found his father. But because he always saw this thing about the place, he thought his father must be there, and staid there every night.

Where this mountain is, there is a village, — about five miles away from where the boy lived. The story was told in this village that something had been taking away the children. In time it was found out that something that lived up in the mountain came down at night and took the children away. That was the way the boy was living. He was a cannibal. He lived on human flesh. Exaggerated stories were told, to the effect that in the cave was a big hole in which the children were placed by this thing, and mashed. The people finally decided to find out what this was that was carrying away the children. So they called up the medicine-men. They sang four nights. On the fourth night, in the evening, they said that this thing, whatever it was, that was taking away their children, was nothing like an animal that did not understand, but it was one of their own people, and could be, if they wished, brought down to the village. So they sent somebody there to bring him down. A young man was sent, with instructions to tell this person that they were having a good time, and he, being important, was asked to come and take part and give them some of his songs, this being the custom when visitors came from other villages.

So, when they brought him down that night, they gave him something to smoke to make him sleep. As the pipe was passed from one to another of the old people, they only pretended to smoke it; but when it came to him, he really smoked, not knowing what it was. So he fell asleep in this gathering, and they picked him up and carried him back to the cave. They piled up wood in the four turns, and set it on fire. When this began to burn, he woke up. He ran from one side of the cave to the other, and jumped up and bumped his head against the top. He shook the cave so hard, that they were afraid he would come out; and they called on the "Older-Brother" (Great Spirit) to help them. So Older-Brother came and put his foot on top of the cave, and held it down until the monster died. The footprint of [823] Older-Brother is still said to be seen on the top of the cave, and there is a crack in the cave supposed to have been made at that time.

STORY OF THE WIND AND RAIN

In a village where there were a great many people who had power to do wonderful things, there lived a certain wise man. This man was

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different from the people who had the great powers. He was only 539
wise in understanding things. He had a very beautiful daughter. He brought up this girl to what he thought was a perfect woman. She would never laugh at foolish things; but she had great power to make other people laugh. She would make other people laugh at foolish things she would say, to see how small their minds were.

So this man said that the girl could marry if she found anybody that would please her. Formerly girls married to please their parents, but this girl could marry the one that pleased her the most. In order that she might decide whom to marry, different ones would come to her. She would talk to them and tell them little foolish things, and they would laugh, and so they lost their chance. She did not want them. She wanted to find somebody that would please her so much that she could laugh.

A Whip-poor-will came to see her. He was very good-looking. He came on the strength of his good looks, thinking they would please her. But that was not what she was looking for. She started to tell him something, and he began to laugh. When he laughed, his mouth went far back, as it is now, and never got any smaller; and he became ashamed of himself and went away.

Coyote came to see the girl, and tried to make her laugh at a few silly things he had to say, but was unsuccessful. And so many others failed in the same way.

A group of young men in the village were talking of these things one day when the girl came by. Whirlwind was one of the great men of the village. These young men called upon him to do something as the girl came by. She came out of the house. The wind began to blow; and before realizing it, she knew it was the Whirlwind coming towards her; and he came right where she was, and twisted her clothes, and she was exposed to the young men. That was what they wanted when they had called on Whirlwind. The girl cried, and went back to the house. Her father got angry at this. He knew that it was done by the Whirlwind. Whirlwind was told to leave the village.

Rain was a good friend to Whirlwind. Rain was blind; and wherever Whirlwind went, he had to lead his friend. So when the old man became angry, and said that Whirlwind had to leave the village, Whirlwind left the village and took his friend with him. Where he went, nobody knew. He was gone four years. During that time there was no rain, and there was no wind. And they gathered together, and called upon different animals to help them find the rain and the wind. They called upon Coyote; and he went around the villages, nosing along, smelling the different roads and paths and trails all about the villages and mountains. In four days he returned home, and said he could not find the rain and the wind. They called upon

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539 the Buzzard; and he flew around over the mountains, looking all over, and in four days he returned home, but he could not find the rain and the wind. They called upon the Bear. He went over the mountains, turning over great heavy things, such as logs and rocks, and went into caves and different places. In four days he returned home without finding the rain and the wind.

They called upon a certain little Bird, a little larger than the humming-bird, but without its long tail and bill. As this little Bird started out of the village, he took a stick and tied one of his down-feathers to it. As he flew into the first of the bushes, he held out this little stick everywhere he went. He would look at the down as it hung on the stick, and it did not move. And everywhere he flew, he carried this little stick; and the down hung there and wouldn't move. One day, somewhere in the east, he put out this little stick, and he saw the down begin to move a little. He flew around here and there, and finally he saw which way this down began to move, and he knew from where the wind was coming. He alighted at a place where there were green grass and flowers and trees, and a little stream of running water. He followed this little stream of water, and came to a big cave. There was a little bit of a fire; and on one side was the Rain, and on the other side was the Whirlwind. They were both asleep. He took one of the coals and put it on Rain's back. The coal sizzled and went out. He took another one and put it on his back, and again it sizzled and went out. He did this four times. The fourth time Rain woke up.

The little Bird told him that for these four years the people had had no rain and no wind. There was no food and no water, and they wanted him to return. Rain told him that he could not return unless his friend went along with him. So he had to wake up Whirlwind. Whirlwind said that although they sent him away, if they now wished to have him back as one of his people, he would return. The little Bird went back.

It was after four years he returned. He told them that in the east there was a most beautiful spot, where they had green grass and flowers, and all kinds of little springs, and that there he had found Rain and Whirlwind. But they both thought themselves so important that they would not return. The people had to send again. They had to call for them four times; and the fourth time Rain and Whirlwind said, "All right, we will come along." Then they started out. On the fourth day the wind began to blow and blow. Thus it was on the first day after they started out. It came closer and closer; and on the fourth day the wind was there, and there was a great wind-storm with dust. After this wind had passed, there came the rain; and it rained and rained and rained. They went all over the country,

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and then they returned home. After this, whenever the people wished rain, they had to call on these two, and they would come at certain times. Whenever Whirlwind came, he had to lead his friend along, because Rain was blind and he had to follow. 539

They say there used to be more rain in Arizona, because they do not call on the rain any more.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.